
Graduate Tracer Study of Far Eastern University – Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, School of Nursing*

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ABSTRACT

A tracer study is a powerful tool that would determine if the School Program mission has been attained and is reflected upon graduates employability, thus, this study aimed to determine the distribution of nursing graduates of Far Eastern University Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation (FEU-NRMF) from 2014-2020 in terms of employment and its engagement to other activities. The study used a descriptive method, data gathered through a questionnaire from 200 respondents, and statistically treated using frequency, proportions, percentage, mean, and ranking. The results revealed that the graduates' self-academic rating is good and the school-acquired skills and competencies contributed greatly to their job performance. For the employment status among the graduates: seventy-five (75%) of the respondents are employed while ten percent (10%) are underemployed. Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents are unemployed.

Key words: Graduate Tracer Study (GTS), nursing graduates, employability, underemployment

In the current pandemic situation nursing profession has been appreciated more than ever, nurses are (and have always been) uniquely equipped to deal with the prolonged crisis of a pandemic, and their presence on the front lines is one of the greatest defenses against disease.¹ As the pandemic worsens, nursing shortages emerge globally. A nursing shortage would mean an increased job for nurses. Rest assured that nursing graduates prior to the pandemic would definitely be employed as reflected in the school's enrollment decrease in graduate nurses. In the study done by Brosola (2018)², it mentioned that in the late 2000s hospitals limit the hiring of nurses and took over the advantage of accepting nurse trainees. This brought problems to the nursing profession because some nurse trainees are paid in exchange for hospital experience for about 3 to 6 months and there is no guarantee that trainees will be hired as staff nurses after the training. The issue has been resolved by prohibiting the nurse

trainee program in some hospitals. Thus, one cannot always guarantee that a nurse's job would always be in-demand, employability usually depends on the trend, healthcare situation, and healthcare economics.

Every educational institution's responsibility is to obtain information and know the whereabouts of its graduates. De Guzman & De Costa (2008)³, urged the higher education institution to develop a graduate tracer study as a tool to develop institutional policies on how to prepare graduates for the demands of the workplace. Tracer study or graduate survey is a survey (in written or oral form) of graduates from education institutions, which takes place sometime after graduation or the end of the training. The subjects of a tracer study can be manifold, but common topics include questions on study progress, the transition to work, work entrance, job career, use of learned competencies, current occupation, and bonds to the education institution (school, centre, university).⁴

The results of Tracer's study are expected to make a complete assessment of how the educational process has impacted their graduates and then use the data to make modifications that could enhance their students' chances of achieving success.⁵ Every

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academic institution's aim is to produce a competent professional imbued with the highest ethical values that would render quality and compassionate care or simply to say a professional molded in every institution's vision. In the four-year stay of a nursing student in their respective school, is basically a reflection of how they were honed, as if like a child refined and perfected over a period of time. At the time that they were ready to depart, one expected them to be transformed in all areas that they had been prepared for. The responsibility of the school doesn't end after graduation, nor after passing the National Licensure Examination but further extends throughout the career life of each graduate, as one will carry the name of the Institution, a link that perpetually exists between them. Commonly, institutional employability relates to the employment rates of university graduates, Harvey (2001)⁶ has defined employability in various ways from individual and institutional perspectives. Individual employability is defined as graduates being able to demonstrate the attributes to obtain jobs. Whereas, for the graduate respondents who are employed with works that do not fully use their skills or abilities gained from studying Bachelor of Science in Nursing are categorized as underemployed (Tan, 2017).

In the 18 years of existence of Far Eastern University – Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation, School of Nursing, it has already produced thousands of graduates, and the pride and glory of every institution is to see its graduates successfully practicing their profession both locally and abroad. In 2017 the Researchers of this study conducted a Tracer Study for the graduates of FEUNRMF School of Nursing from 2007-2013, out of the 474 respondents, results showed that 63.5% of respondents' are employed while 21.5% are underemployed. Fifteen percent (15%) of the respondents are unemployed. A follow-up study from 2014 to 2020 graduates is pursued to gain significant information of our, graduate's whereabouts, their employability, the waiting period before getting employed and the relatedness of their current job to their college degree.

This study determined the factors associated with employability of the Graduates of Far Eastern University-Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation - School of Nursing from Batch 2014 – 2020. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, civil status, monthly income, year graduated, exams passed, location of residence, and place of origin; self-

academic rating and examinations taken; distinguish the employment status as to employed, underemployed and unemployed; classify the job placement of the graduates as to the location of work and field of work; know the employment rate per batch; Identify the factors influencing BSN Graduates employability as to employment factors, underemployment factors and unemployment factors; and Determine the school-acquired skills and competencies to the graduates' chosen profession.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The researchers of this study utilized the descriptive method of research through the use of a cross-sectional survey design. Through this survey method of research, we were able to determine if the BSN graduates of 2014 – 2020 used their graduated profession in their present job or were employed in connection to their line of Profession, the current status of their employment and the difficulty encountered in finding employment.

Locale and Population

There are 330 Nursing graduates from 2014 – 2020 of Far Eastern University - Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation and were purposively chosen by the researchers as they were the batches that fall on the institution's objective to trace back after graduation. The location of respondents varies from local to international setting depending on their current work. Since it is not possible to survey all graduates of Batch 2014 - 2020, this study is limited to graduates of Batch 2014 – 2020 with known electronic mail addresses and social media accounts. A total of 200 graduates responded to the survey providing a participation rate of 60% which according to the Manual Tracer Studies by Ralf Lange (2001), a tracer study should, at least, cover 60% of the graduates per year of graduation.

Instruments

The questionnaire of this research was taken from the previous study conducted by the researcher entitled "A Tracer Study of BSN Graduates of Far Eastern University Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation Batch 2007 – 2013", which was adapted from the Graduate Tracer Study conducted by the Commission on Higher

Education (CHED) and Adriano A. Arcelo.⁷ There were modifications done by the researchers to suit the study being undertaken. A pre-test of the questionnaire were conducted to nursing graduates, content validated by faculty members considered experts in instrument development. Questionnaire items were based on CHED mandates of tracing university graduates. The questionnaire consists of four parts to gather the necessary data needed for the study such as personal information of the respondents, employment status, employability profile, and employability factors. The questionnaire has a close-ended question so respondents could choose more than one response as they deemed fit to their present circumstances.

Data Collection and Procedure

Research Protocol were given approval by the FEU-NRMF Institutional Ethics Review Committee. A list of names was obtained from the School of nursing, and names of graduates per batch were entered into the computer for the random selection of participants. Informed Consent was obtained from the participants and assurance of protection of anonymity and confidentiality most especially to the unemployed group provided. Invitation links, ICF, and questionnaires through personal distribution, electronic mail, and social media sites were used to collect data, and options for retrieval were provided. The School of Nursing devised a coordinating system plan since the first batch of graduates in 2007 through its BOSS officers, it was implemented in every graduating Batch for easy tracking of graduates and for future references. The researcher waited for the turn-ins of the survey questionnaire after which, the link expired after 72 hours, the Researcher then continued to proceed with the random computer selection of graduates' names for the recruitment of other graduates until the required number of respondents is reached. Data were collected from March to June 2022.

Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected were classified, tabulated, and coded for analysis using Microsoft Excel and computer-processed. The following statistical tools were used in interpreting the data from the survey: Profiles were summarized using Mean, Standard Deviation for quantitative variables like age, and Percentage for qualitative variables

was used. Frequency distribution (f) and Percent Relative Frequency (%RF) to know the percentage of the number of times an event was assigned to Graduates compared to the total number of events and Employment-Population Ratio to determine ratio of employed persons to the total nursing graduate population. Weighted Mean was used to determine the degree of perception of the graduate in the usefulness and relevance of their educational background to their employment status and Ranking was used to determine the relative position of the variable from other variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, the majority of the respondents are 28 years of age (22%). Respondents that fall under the age group came from the higher batch (2014) which comprises the largest batch among the surveyed batches. In the study of Abrigo & Ortiz, (2019)⁸, the nursing profession currently belongs to the young cadre of healthcare professionals. In 1990, the median age of pharmacists and professional nurses was 34- and 31 years, respectively. By 2015, these have gone down to 32- and 28 years, respectively, as a direct result of the increasing number of new board passers, who are generally younger, in these fields. This is despite the increasing trend in the number of new-hire temporary Filipino health care migrant workers, particularly among professional nurses.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of age.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
22	12	6
23	17	9
24	26	13
25	21	11
26	22	11
27	28	14
28	43	22
29	14	7
30	7	4
31	2	1
32	2	1
35	4	2
37	1	1
Total	200	100

Table 2 shows the profile of respondents in terms of sex; 71 percent are female respondents, only shows that nursing continues to be a female dominated occupation. Based on the data from 191 countries that participated in the State of the World's Nursing Report published by the World Health Organization, (2020)⁹, 90 percent of nurses are women. However, the 29% male respondents can be seen as an increasing participation among men in nursing occupations.

Table 2. Profile of respondents in terms of sex.

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	141	71
Male	59	29
Total	200	100

Table 3 shows 81 percent of the respondents are single, graduates chose to focus intently on their chosen career, and set married life aside for the moment.

Table 3. Profile of respondents in terms of civil status.

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	162	81
Married	29	15
Single Parent	5	2
Married but not living with spouse	4	2
Separated / Divorce	0	0
Widow/Widower	0	0
Total	200	100

Table 4 shows the location of the residence of graduates at the time of survey, 69 percent of the respondents are based in the Philippines whereas 31 percent of the respondents are based abroad. In a study done by (Cuevas et.al., 2021), students took up nursing to go abroad and help their family. Many nursing students in the Philippines study nursing with the mindset to leave their homeland and work overseas. The United States being at the top of their list as a major destination because of the many opportunities offered in the "land of milk and honey". Followed by Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and other first world countries that

offer vast opportunities for nurses. Hence, within 5 years after graduation, graduates from FEU-NRMF were able to fulfill plans to live abroad.

Table 4. Profile of respondents in terms of location of residence.

Location of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Local	137	69
Abroad	63	31
Total	200	100

Table 5 on the next page shows that 74% of the respondents came from NCR, and 10% came from Region 3 which is composed of the provinces of Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales. FEU-NRMF is strategically located in Fairview, Quezon City. Geographical location affects the parental choice of school. Instead of thinking about school as solely a location one must travel to, parents' preferences for schools are informed by their understanding of geography as both space and place. These understandings connect to other preferences often invisible in school choice decisions.¹⁰

Table 5. Profile of respondents in terms region of origin.

Region of Origin	Frequency	Percentage
Region 1	8	4
Region 2	7	4
Region 3	19	10
Region 4	8	4
Region 5	1	1
Region 6	0	0
Region 7	0	0
Region 8	0	0
Region 9	4	2
Region 10	0	0
Region 11	0	0
Region 12	0	0
NCR	149	74
CAR	3	2
ARMM	1	1
CARAGA	0	0
Total	200	100

Table 6 shows the respondents' year of graduation at FEU-NRMF. The School of Nursing has produced 330 graduates in 2014 - 2020. Based on the results

majority of the respondents were from batch 2014 which is 59 (29%). Batch 2014 comprises the largest number of graduates, succeeding batches showed a decline in graduates that can be attributed to the CHED Moratorium on the Opening of the New Bachelor of Science in Nursing Program (2004), which stipulates that “There is a proliferation of HEI offering BS Nursing programs which, if allowed to continue unabated could seriously affect the quality nursing education in the country and consequently, the status of employment of Filipino nurses in the world market”. On July 13, 2022, CHED lifted the moratorium on new nursing programs following their comprehensive assessment initiated during the height of the COVID 19 pandemic. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SGDs) imply a huge gap in the ideal number of 300,470 nurses, which is far higher than the actual number of nurses in the Philippines, of around 90,205 (pna.gov.ph)

Table 6. Profile of the respondents as to year graduated.

Year Graduated	Frequency	Percentage
2014	59	29
2015	34	17
2016	10	5
2017	20	10
2018	25	13
2019	38	19
2020	14	7
Total	200	100

Table 7 shows the self-academic rating of graduates from 2014 - 2020. Sixty-three percent (63%) Self-academic rating is good and sixteen percent (16%) believed that their academic rating is very good. Self-academic rating or self-assessment is a person’s perception of the quality of their work and their academic skills (Leon, et al.,2021) graduates may perceive their academic performance differently depending on their self-concept. Academic self-concept is defined as “a domain-specific self-concept which explains the way the students perceived and conceptualize their ability in academic settings” (Rosen, et al., 2010)

Table 8 showed exams taken by graduates-respondents. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the respondents passed the Nurse Licensure Examination (NLE) which is given by the Professional Regulation Commission to enable the graduates to work as

professional nurses in the Philippine setting. One hundred percent passing percentage (100%) result for takers of Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing School (CGFNS). CGFNS serves as credential evaluation of higher secondary school education, verification of nursing licensure and completion of a nursing program. The Saudi Prometrics Examination is a nursing test for aspiring nurse technicians and specialists. Eighty eight percent (88%) passed the Nurse Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), it is a national exam that a nurse must pass to become a licensed nurse in the United States. Fifty percent (50%) passed the Health Authority of Abu Dhabi (HAAD), an examination if a nurse wants to practice in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Nursing graduates after passing the NLE are preparing themselves for another examination required for employment abroad.

Table 7. Self-academic rating.

YSelf-Academic Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	9	5
Very good	32	16
Good	126	63
Not so bad	28	14
Bad	5	3
Very bad	0	0
Total	200	100

Table 8. Exams taken.

Exams Taken	Exams Taken	Passed (n)	Percentage	Not Passed (n)	Percentage
NLE	188	187	99	1	0.5
NCLEX	65	57	88	8	12
IELTS	47	40	85	7	15%
CGFNS	21	21	100	0	0
HAAD	4	2	50	2	50
Prometrics	12	12	100	0	0
Total	337	319	100	18	100

- Multiple responses

Table 9 shows other exams taken by graduates of 2014-2022. There are 44 (22%) graduates who took other professional exams to make them qualified and prepare themselves for other employment requirements, such as Occupational English Test

(OET) five percent (5%) as proof of English language proficiency which is accepted in UK, USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand and Computer Based Test / Objective Structured Clinical Examination (3%) for United Kingdom (UK).

Table 9. Other professional exams taken.

Other Professional Exam Taken	Frequency	Percentage
PLE	3	1.5
CBT	6	3
NMC-UK CBT	1	0.5
CELBAN	1	0.5
CPNRE	1	0.5
OET	10	5
Singapore Nursing Board Exam	3	1.5
CCRN Certification	1	0.5
ICAO English Proficiency Level 6	1	0.5
Commercial Pilot License Exam	1	0.5
CNOR	1	0.5
Cabin Crew Training	1	0.5
Nursing and Midwifery Council	3	1.5
FNP	1	0.5
OSCE UK	3	1.5
MLE	1	0.5
German Language TELC B2	1	0.5
NC2 Caregiver	1	0.5
Gesundheits und Krankenpflegerin	1	0.5
Nephrology Nurse Certification	1	0.5
NMAT	1	0.5
Occupational English Test	5	2.5
CEN	1	0.5
Total	44	22

Table 10 reveals reasons for taking the degree bachelor of science in nursing. Influence of parents or relatives rank first with 141 respondents (23%). Opportunity for employment abroad ranks second with 117 respondents (19%) and strong passion for the profession ranks third with 66 respondents (11%). In a study done by Montayre, et al., 2016¹² Filipino first year nursing students' decision of taking up nursing is influenced by looking at the future they believe nursing careers can bring to their families and to their own future.

Table 11 shows the awards received by graduates during their stay in the School of Nursing. There are numerous recognition given to students in their college days specifically in the second level; given during Capping and Candlelighting Ceremony and fourth level given during the Clinical graduation. Honorary award given to Nursing Student Council and Board of Senior Students officers got 8.5%. Over-all 26.5% received awards in college, majority of which were given during the clinical graduation.

Table 12 shows the training and advanced studies undertaken by graduates. One hundred twenty three respondents (62%) of graduates underwent training after graduation for qualification and compliance to employment requirements. Basic Life Support got 10.5%, Intravenous Therapy training got 10%. Advanced Cardiac Life Support got nine point five percent (9.5%). The aforementioned training are basic training requirements in a hospital setting.

Table 10. Reasons for taking the course.

Reasons for taking the course	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
High Grades in subject	9	1	12
Good Grades in High School	14	2	9
Influence of parents or relatives	141	23	1
Peer influence	10	2	11
Inspired by a role model	43	7	5.5
Strong passion for the Profession	66	11	3
Prospect for immediate employment	43	7	5.5
Status or prestige of the Profession	36	6	7
Availability of course offering in chosen	30	5	8
Prospect of career advancement	53	9	4
Affordable for the Family	11	2	10
Prospect of attractive compensation	38	6	6
Opportunity for employment abroad	117	19	2
No particular choice or no better idea	7	1	13

- Multiple responses

Table 11. Awards received in college.

Honors/Awards Received in College	Frequency	Percentage
Battery Exam Placer	6	3
Best Head Nurse	2	1
Best Research	9	4.5
Best in Case Study	4	2
Class Valedictorian	2	1
Cum Laude	5	2.5
Dean's Lister	1	0.5
Excellence in Clinical Practice Award	1	0.5
Honorary Award (NSC & BOSS)	17	8.5
Mr. Nightingale Cap & Pin Ceremony	1	0.5
1st Runner up - Ms. Nursing 2014	1	0.5
GWA Ranking	4	2
Total	53	26.5

Table 12. Training / Advance study undertaken by graduates.

Title of Training/ Advance Study	Frequency	Percentage
Master's Degree	12	6
Doctorate Degree	2	1
Medicine	11	5.5
Hemodialysis Training	8	4
BLS	21	0.5
ACLS	19	9.5
PALS	5	2.5
IV Therapy	20	10
Critical Care Course	7	3.5
BOSH (Occupational Health)	2	1
Cabin crew Training	2	1
Military Training	1	0.5
Leadership training	1	0.5
Echocardiography Training	1	0.5
None	11	5.5
Total	123	62

- Multiple responses

Table 13. Reason for pursuing advance studies.

Reason for Pursuing Advance Studies	Frequency	Percentage
For promotion	4	5
For professional development	82	95
Total	86	100

Table 13 reveals the reason for graduates pursuing advanced studies, which is for professional development (95%). Undertaken training, categorized as hospital requirements is still regarded by graduates not only as requirements but as professional development as well. In countries in which there is demand for degree-prepared nurses, education programmes that “bridge” or “upgrade” an existing nursing credential can represent an important career development mechanism and generate high rates of private return (State of the World's Nursing, 2020)

Employment Status as to Employed, Underemployed and Unemployed

Table 14 shows the employment status of graduates as to employed, underemployed and unemployed. In terms of employed status, Batch 2014 got the highest number of employed graduates with 47 employed out of 59 respondents, which is equivalent to 80%, 12% underemployed and 59% unemployed. Batch 2015 has a higher employability rate equivalent to 88%, 30 employed out of 34 respondents and non-declared as unemployed. Batch 2018 had 25 respondents; 52% of which were employed and 40% were unemployed. The lowest employed rate was from Batch 2020, there were 14 respondents, 43% of which were

Table 14. Employment status among the graduates of Batch 2014-2020.

		Current work status							
		Employed		Underemployed		Unemployed		Total	
		N	%	N	%	n	%	n	%
Year Graduated	2014	45	76	9	15	5	8	59	100
	2015	30	88	4	12	0	0	34	100
	2016	8	80	1	10	1	10	10	100
	2017	16	80	1	5	3	15	20	100
	2018	13	52	2	8	10	40	25	100
	2019	32	84	1	3	5	13	38	100
	2020	6	43	2	14	6	43	14	100
Total		150	75	20	10	30	15	200	100

employed, 14% were underemployed and 14% were unemployed. Batch 2020 status cannot be regarded as low employability as this was the batch that has been affected by the pandemic and lockdowns, the batch was able to take the NLE in July and November 2021 only.

Table 15 shows the summary of current work status of Batch 2014-2020. Out of 200 respondents there were 75% employed, (9% underemployed and sixteen percent (16%) unemployed.

Table 15. Summary of current work status.

Current Work Status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	150	75
Underemployed	20	10
Unemployed	30	15
Total	200	100

Job Placement of the Employed Graduates

Table 16 shows the type of work of the respondents related to the nursing profession. The majority of the graduates work in the Institutional (Hospital setting) with 69% followed by the Occupational setting which is 11%. Public health nursing got 8%, which is an area not explored in the past. Public health is gaining much attention nowadays due to high salaries and government benefits. Employment in the hospital setting is the expected pathway of a nursing graduate, hospital experience is a basic requirement more so if one is planning to go abroad for future employment. On the other hand, none of the respondents pursued a career in the Academe. One of the biggest challenges in nurse education is the recruitment and retention of sufficient numbers

Table 16. Job placement of the employed graduates in terms of field of work.

Name of Industry	Frequency	Percentage
Institutional	104	69
Academic	0	0
Occupational	17	11
Military	4	3
Home Health Care	13	9
Public Health	12	8
Total	150	100

of qualified nurse faculty. Challenges include their employment setting (educational organization versus clinical agency), which may involve salary differences and protected time for teaching (State of the World's Nursing, 2020)

Table 17 depicts the period that took the graduates to find their first job. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents were employed less than six months after graduation and 26% obtained their jobs within 7-11 months after graduation. Twenty-two percent (22%) obtained the jobs within 12 - 24 months. The table also shows the length of employment of the graduates wherein 31% of them stayed in their job for more than 60 months while 21% stayed only for 25-36 months. It only shows that the majority of nurses are staying in their current job.

Table 17. Length of time before acquiring first job.

Duration to Get the First Job	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 months	75	50
7-11 months	39	26
12-24 months (1-2 years)	32	22
25-36 months (2.1-3 years)	1	1
37-60 months (3.1-5 years)	2	1
More than 60 months	1	1
Total	150	100

Duration of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 months	12	8
7-11 months	9	6
12-24 months (1-2 years)	22	15
25-36 months (2.1-3 years)	32	21
37-60 months (3.1-5 years)	28	19
More than 60 months	47	31
Total	150	100

Table 18 shows the monthly earnings of employed graduates. Seventy five percent (75%) were earning Php31,000 and above, and 8% were receiving Php16,000-Php20,000 gross monthly salary. Citing data from the Department of Health, Presto-Abenojar noted that the total number of nurses in both the public and the private sector as of December last year stood at 172,589. "Out of 10 registered nurses, two are working either in the public or private sector so that's equivalent to 19% of the total 915,291 registered nurses," (Philstar, June 21, 2022). Nurses working in the government receive Salary Grade 15 for Nurse

I equivalent to Php33,575 which was effective June 1, 2021, a move to recognize nurses role as very important to public health, especially during the time of pandemic and a way to entice nurses to serve longer in the Philippines.

Table 18. Gross monthly earnings of employed graduates.

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10,000	3	2
11,000 - 15,000	2	1
16,000 - 20,000	12	8
21,000 - 25,000	10	7
26,000 - 30,000	10	7
31,000 and above	114	75
Total	151	100

Table 19 shows the factors influencing the respondents' reason for staying in the job, Salaries and benefits were revealed as the primary factor with forty-nine percent (49%). Henry Herzberg's theory of motivation is related to these two factors for employee retention at any organization. This theory is sometimes called the two-factor theory which is classified as the motivating factors and hygiene factors. Hygiene factors are also called dissatisfiers like less pay according to the education of the individual which does not match his/her skills or expertise. The motivators are called satisfiers which increases job satisfaction like competitive salary packages, and attractive and appealing reward system, these are the key motivators at any company which motivates employees to do their work more enthusiastically and leads to employee retention. Respondents rated professional growth (19%) as the second reason for staying in the jobs. Professional growth essentially refers to gaining new skills and work experience that can help one reach a goal in the chosen career. Keeping oneself up-to-date with trends gives one a better chance to distinguish oneself from others for years to come (Cote, A., 2022). Proximity to residence got 12%. It was observed that workers frequently exhibit a strong attachment to place, which results in the "spatial fixity" of local labor and the accompanying potential for differences in wages and other attributes across local labor markets (Martin, 2000).

Job Placement of the Underemployed Graduates

Table 20 shows the job placement of underemployed graduates. Underemployed graduates

Table 19. Factors influencing respondents employability as to employed graduates.

Reason for Staying in Your Job	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and benefits	74	49
Related to special skill	8	5
Suited to personal objectives	9	6
Proximity to Residence	18	12
Family Influence	4	3
Peer Influence	0	0
Related to course or program	1	1
Professional Growth	29	19
Career Challenge	7	5
Total	150	100

are classified as employed graduates with work that does not fully use their skills or abilities gained from studying Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents pursue continuing education in the medical field and are now working as physicians, while the other 25% pursue a career in entrepreneurship. Newly graduated nurses were attracted to jobs that can employ them and give them a salary even without the experience needed by other companies.¹³

Table 20. Job placement of the underemployed graduates in terms of field of work.

Field of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Technical Professionals	1	5
Information Technology	0	0
Research Department	0	0
Education	0	0
Clerical	1	5
Creative or Artistic	0	0
Entrepreneurship	5	25
Hospitality Management	0	0
Culinary Management	0	0
Others, Please Specify	Frequency	Percentage
Utilization Review Nurse	1	5
Biotechnology - Pharmacovigilance	1	5
Pharmaceutical	1	5
Physician	5	25
Naval Intelligence	1	5
Customer Service	1	5
Tourism/Hospitality - Aviation	1	5
Clinical Prior Authorization Nurse	1	5
Government Employee	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 21 shows the location of work of underemployed graduates. Eighty percent (80%) of the underemployed graduates are working locally which indicates that most of them are based in the Philippines and only four (4) respondents are working abroad, two of which are in the USA.

Table 21. Job placement of the underemployed graduates in terms of location of work.

Location of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Local	16	80
Abroad	4	20
Total	20	100

Specific location	Frequency	Percentage
Philippines	16	80
USA	2	10
Middle East	1	5
Not specified	1	5
Total	20	100

Table 22 shows the duration of the underemployed graduates to get the first job. Forty five percent (45%) of the graduates were able to seek employment less than six months from the time of graduation, clearly indicating that FEUNRMF nursing graduates are employable even in fields of work outside of their graduate degree program.

Table 23 presents the factors influencing employability of underemployed graduates, Salaries and benefits rank first, in the study done by Ashe-Edmunds (2014)¹⁴, that in addition to salary and wages, benefits make up your compensation package, and it's possible to improve what you can offer your employees without spending more money. The better your compensation package, the more likely you will retain key employees. The second in rank is suited to personal objectives and the third in rank is for professional growth. Underemployed graduates find current employment as a place that provides continuous learning and development in their chosen field and gives them more opportunities to hone their skills that pave the way to more reasons to stay in their current job.

Table 24 reveals the gross monthly earnings of underemployed graduates. Seventy-five percent of the underemployed graduates receive monthly earnings of more than Php31,000, which factored in the reason for staying outside the field of nursing.

Table 22. Duration to get the first job of underemployed graduates.

Duration to get First Job	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 months	9	45
7-11 months	5	25
12-24 months (1-2 years)	2	10
25-36 months (2.1-3 years)	1	5
37-60 months (3.1-5 years)	0	0
More than 60 months	1	5
Not specified	2	10
Total	20	100

Duration of Work of Underemployed Graduates	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 months	3	15
7-11 months	2	10
12-24 months (1-2 years)	4	20
25-36 months (2.1-3 years)	1	5
37-60 months (3.1-5 years)	1	5
More than 60 months	7	35
Not specified	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 23. Factors influencing respondents employability as to underemployed graduates.

Reason for Staying in Your Job	Frequency	Rank
Salaries and benefits	13	1
Related to special skill	5	4.5
Suited to personal objectives	9	2
Proximity to Residence	5	4.5
Family Influence	4	6
Peer Influence	1	8
Related to course or program	3	7
Professional Growth	8	3
Career Challenge	5	4.5
• Multiple responses		

Table 24. Gross monthly earnings of underemployed graduates.

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10,000	0	0
11,000 - 15,000	0	0
16,000 - 20,000	2	10
21,000 - 25,000	0	0
26,000 - 30,000	3	15
31,000 and above	15	75
Not specified	2	10
Total	18	100

Unemployed Graduates Previous Work Experience

Table 25 shows that 74% of unemployed graduates had the chance to work after graduation. Sixty-three percent (63%) of previous work experience was nursing related and twenty-four percent of respondents did not reveal their previous field of work.

Table 25. Unemployed graduates previous work experience.

Have You Been Employed Before	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	74
No	8	26
Total	30	100
Previous field of work		
Nursing (Hospital, Academic, Community etc.)	19	63
Information technology (Computer, Software related work)	1	3
Clerical (Secretary, Book keeper)	2	7
Hospitality Management (Hotel, Restaurant)	1	3
Not specified	7	24
Total	30	100

Table 26 shows unemployed graduates' duration of employment. Eleven percent (11%) worked for less than six months. In the study done by Gandhi, et al. (2011)¹⁵ that gave realization to what nursing work is, that some nurses graduate and start working and then determine the profession is not what they thought it would be. Others may work a while and experience burnout and leave the profession.

Table 27 shows factors influencing unemployability among the graduates, sixty-three percent are pursuing advanced studies. The majority of the unemployed graduates did not respond to the question.

Table 26. Duration of employment of unemployed nurses.

Duration of employment	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 6 months	11	37
7-11 months	3	10
12-24 months (1-2 years)	2	7
25-36 months (2.1-3 years)	3	10
37-60 months (3.1-5 years)	1	3
More than 60 months	3	10
Not specified	7	23
Total	30	100

Table 27. Factors influencing unemployability among the graduates.

Reason why not yet employed	Frequency	Percentage
Advance/further studies	5	17
Family situations	1	3
Health-related reasons	1	3
Other reasons (going to take NCLEX)	1	3
Not specified	22	74
Total	30	100

School-Acquired Skills and Competencies to the Graduates chosen Profession

Table 28 shows the graduates perception of the relevance of the nursing curriculum to their current job. Eighty-nine percent (89%) agree that nursing curricula are relevant to their current job.

Table 28. Relevance of the curriculum to current job.

Relevance of Curriculum	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	177	89
No	12	6
Not specified	11	5
Total	200	100

Table 29 shows the school-acquired competencies and skills. Communication skills rank first as skills developed in college. It is understood that emphasis must be placed on the importance of communication between nurse and patient and nursing education must focus on communication skills of nurses.^{16,17} Critical thinking and Problem-solving skills rank second and third. Critical thinking is applied by nurses in the process of solving problems of patients and decision-making process with creativity to enhance the effect. It is an essential process for a safe, efficient and skillful nursing intervention.¹⁷ School acquired skills are necessary for them to perform their job well.

Table 29. School-acquired competencies and skills in their chosen occupation.

School-acquired Competencies and Skills	Frequency	Rank
Communication skills	164	1
Human Relations skills	116	4
Entrepreneurial skills	33	5
Problem-solving skills	140	3
Critical Thinking skills	157	2
Other Skills	5	6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Tracer Study aimed to determine distribution of nursing graduates of FEU-NRMF from 2014-2020 in terms of employment and engagement to other fields. Out of 330 graduates, 200 responded to the survey with the average age of 28, mostly females, and single in status. Reasons in choosing the nursing degree program are based on parental and relatives influences. Majority of whom are employed and working in the institutional setting and are taking professional exams to make them qualified and prepare themselves for other employment requirements abroad. Self-academic ratings of the majority are good and viewed the curriculum as relevant to their current field of work. The graduates were able to find work in less than 6 months after graduation and were staying longer in the chosen field. The competencies that the graduates find useful in their jobs are communication skills, critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills. It is recommended by the Researcher to explore ways to encourage graduates to pursue a career in Academe or to motivate those graduates working in a clinical setting to engage in academic work. Less graduate nurses who pursue careers in academics directly impacts the nursing shortage as there are growing demands for faculty members to educate baccalaureate students who will eventually care for patients.

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